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"OOH! it's getting dark!" Betty Anne cried, jumping from her low chair by the fireside, and letting her sampler and ball of bright wool drop to the floor. She ran to the tiny window and looked out into the yard which stretched between the log cabin and the barn beyond. Contrasted against the fire-lit room, the blackness outside loomed deeply. A wind tossed the branches of the bare trees and crooned a song of coming winter. Betty Anne shivered and turned again to the warmth of the fireside.

"Methinks I shall surely not go out there alone this night. If Blackbird does without supper once, 'twill not hurt him—and who will know?"

She stooped to pick up the sampler upon which she had been embroidering all the afternoon. So steadily had she worked that twilight had dropped unheeded over her lonely little home on the outskirts of Topsfield in long-ago Massachusetts. Betty Anne spread the sampler on the table, smoothed out its stiff folds, glowed as she read the nearly completed stanza, worked in red and green wool:—

"Betty Anne Holton is my name,
Lord guide my heart that I
may do Thy will;
And fill my hands with tasks
of goodly skill,
And I will give the glory to
Thy name."

It was a beautiful thought, she mused, and it meant so much to her. She folded the sampler and laid it carefully in the lower drawer of the tall chest in the corner. Then she turned to her supper-getting tasks. She lighted a candle and set it on the table; filled a small iron pot with water and hung it on the crane. She would make corn-meal mush, and there was a plate of cranberry tarts her mother had left her as a special treat. Betty Anne was alone tonight. Her mother had left at noon for the colony at Wenham, to visit Aunt Susan

The Signal

By Jane Johnson

who was ill. Her father and brother Samuel were away on a hunting trip. They had been absent more than a year now, and there were those in the colony who whispered that 'probably they would never return. Betty Anne would not listen to their whispers. Her faith in the Good Father above was too strong. Every night she prayed that He would guide her loved ones home. Every night, too, since they had gone away, she had kept her promise to care for Blackbird, her father's valuable horse. Horses were scarce in the colony and cost quite a bit of money. Blackbird was a fine, spirited animal; with the least neglect he might sicken and die. As Betty Anne stepped from the fireplace to the table, placing her supper on the clean white cloth, suddenly she stopped short. She had forgotten to close the barn door when she had been out there at noon. She remembered now she had even set a rock against it to keep it open. Well it would have to stay open; it wasn't very cold

out anyway. The air wouldn't do Blackbird any harm, and she couldn't, she just couldn't go out there alone in the darkness.

Betty Anne's supper didn't taste as good as she had thought it would. The corn mush had lumps in it, and the tarts tasted too sour. When she had washed her pewter plate and bowl and put them back on the shelf in the corner cupboard, Betty Anne blew out the candle. My, it was lonesome without mother! Betty Anne hadn't realized it would be so silent and tiresome to be alone. Oh! if only father and Samuel were home. When would they come back! Tears filled the girl's eyes. She tossed back her head and wiped away the tears. She would not weep, she told herself. God would bring her father and Samuel safely home if only she trusted and went straight on day after day doing her duty. The word broke guiltily on her lips.

Abruptly, Betty Anne rose from her chair, took her little round tin lantern from the mantel shelf, and when she had lighted the candle inside, set it on the table. Hastily she threw her cloak about her shoulders, seized the lantern and let herself out into the darkness.

"Ooooh!" she gave a little scream of alarm. Had someone really been standing beside the door! Betty Anne felt rather than saw a shadow flee around the end of the cabin. For a minute she stood still, undetermined whether to go on or to return to the cabin. "One can full well imagine things when alone," she said with courage and sped toward the barn. Blackbird greeted her with a long, low whinney. The grateful animal drank the water she brought him with deep gulps. Quickly she measured out his oats and emptied them into the trough. Then from the side of the stall she pulled down a warm homespun blanket, threw it over the animal's back, straightening it carefully and pinning it securely beneath his neck, while he tried to rub his



"Without a word he seized Betty Anne by the wrist . . .
and plunged into the dark woods."

nose against her cheek. Suddenly, as she turned, Betty Anne realized she was not alone in the barn. Someone was coming toward her from the shadowy corner. Quickly she blew out the candle, but not before she had caught a terrified glimpse of a trailing feathery head-dress. Betty Anne fled out of the barn, aware that her pursuer had slipped on the damp floor as he had made a dash for her. She slammed the door behind her and quickly slipped the heavy bar in place. It seemed to her that she had heard her name whispered. But that was silly, she reasoned. How could an Indian know her name?

Back in the cabin again, trembling like a leaf in the wind, she barred the door and closed the shutters on the one small window. Then she prepared to bank the fire. She was interrupted by the sound of hurried footsteps outside, a light tap at the door. Then, "Open, Betty Anne! 'Tis Prue and Peter Hastings come to spend the night with you."

Gladly Betty Anne flung the door open. Prue and Peter crowded into the room. Prue's face was very white; her eyes held frightened shadows.

"Your mother stopped at our place mid-afternoon," Peter explained "and did bid us come and visit with you. We hurried full well with our chores, but it did take us a goodly time to walk over here—and—"

"And—" Prudence interrupted, "we saw an Indian lurking behind a tree at the end of your pasture."

Betty Anne winced; her face white.

"He did not seem to see us," Peter went on, "but his eyes were watching this house."

Breathlessly Betty Anne told of the captive Indian in the barn. What did it all mean? If the Indians were going to attack the house why had they not done so long before? They surely must have known the girl was alone if they had been watching the house for any length of time.

To be sure they all agreed there was nothing for them to do but to wait. To try to escape if Indians were posted outside the house would be utter folly. The nearest neighbor was a mile away; even though they ran, Indians would swiftly overtake them.

All Indians, they knew, were admirers of courage. Therefore they felt it would be best to give no sign of fear.

"You are chilled through," Betty Anne said, drawing them toward the fire, which she stirred up with a long poker, "I will make some hot tea and I have some cranberry tarts."

Betty Anne spread the table in the firelight and they gathered about it. Scarcely had Betty Anne taken a mouthful, when she rose suddenly, listening. A tapping sound came to their ears. "Do you hear it?" she called.

"Uhm," Peter nodded, "one long rap and three short ones."

A Thought for the New Year

By M. LOUISE C. HASTINGS

'Twould not be wise to have all sun,
The flowers need the rain;
'Twould not be best for perfect health,
We grow through pain;
But there can be great happiness
With sun and raindrops, too,—
So do your best, and leave the rest,
And Joy will come to you!

Betty Anne jumped from the table, seized her hood.

"Come with me, Prue and Peter," she called, "I am going to open the barn door."

Across the yard in a jiffy, Betty Anne lifted the heavy bar which locked the door. It swung open. Someone plunged out. It was too dark to see more than the outline of a youth, his head topped by waving feathers.

Without a word he seized Betty Anne by the wrist, motioned to Prudence and Peter to follow, and plunged into the dark woods behind the barn, his moccasined feet making scant sound. On and on they went, up a steep hill, down into a valley, their descent speeded by a blanket of slippery pine needles.

Suddenly he stopped short, listening intently. Away off in the distance, he heard the angry whooping of savages. He quickened his footsteps. Presently they came to a small pond. Betty Anne knew the place. Two years ago, she had picked blueberries here with Samuel. Stealthily they crept along the shore of the pond which was bordered on one side by a high rocky bank. Suddenly their leader stopped, felt for an opening, found it, and they entered a cave in the side of the bank.

The Indian struck flint, lighted a pile of twigs. In the flare Betty Anne screamed. On a bed of boughs in one corner of the cave, lay her father. "Father! Father!" she called, dropping down on her knees beside him. Then she turned to thank the guiding Indian. He had thrown off his feathery headgear. He faced her in the dim light.

"Samuel!" Her arms went about his neck.

Explanations followed quickly. The father and Samuel had indeed been held captives by a roving band of Indians. Now these Indians were leaving for the South, pursued by another warring band. Samuel had persuaded them to take the trail which they knew would bring them close to Topsfield, hoping that they might be able to escape. The father had suddenly become too ill to go on, and they had left him by the side of the road to perish, as was their heartless custom.

That night Samuel had managed to steal away from the Indian encampment. Retracing his footsteps, he had found his father and hidden him in the cave. Then

he had started for the cabin in Topsfield, to secure aid, but already the Indians, missing him, had sent back a scout who trailed him to within a few feet of the cabin. There he stood guard waiting to attack if Samuel approached the house. "That is why I hid in the barn," he ended. "I saw the door open and I knew you would come out to care for Black-bird."

Betty Anne bit her lower lip; nodded her head.

"But the Indian who was on guard, will he not attack when we return?" Peter asked.

Samuel shook his head. Then he explained that the tribe being pursued by another, would not long linger in the neighborhood. That when he had heard their yelling and shouting a while back, it had told him the scout had returned to tell of his fruitless search, and that they were about to start off again on the trail to the South.

However, it was long past dawn before they left the cave for the log cabin, Peter and Samuel assisting Mr. Holton over the rough journey.

And such a happy breakfast as they had in the cozy kitchen. Betty Anne and Prudence fairly flew about making corn mush and oaten cakes and a steaming kettle of tea.

"Surely the Good Lord above did grant your prayer," Prudence murmured, as together the girls bent over the hearth, turning the oaten cakes on a griddle. Betty Anne nodded, "He grants all, Prue," she said firmly, "if we trust, and despise not our daily tasks."

Strawberry Jam

By MAY JUSTUS

I went a-visiting Miss Melinda—
Miss Melinda Brown.

She lives a mile or so in the country;
I live here in town.

"What would you like for your dinner, dearie?"

Miss Melinda said.

"Strawberry jam, if you please, I told her,

"Strawberry jam and bread."

"Strawberry jam's in the corner cupboard,

On the lowest shelf."

I had to climb on a chair and tip-toe,
But I helped myself.

When I am visiting Miss Melinda

Time goes by on wings.

"What do you do every day?" I asked her.

"I make jam and things."

When it was time to go home I kissed her.

"Thanks for the bread and jam."

"Come again right away, child," she bade me—

Right away I am!

The Little Steam Engine

By Clara Belle Locke

"TOOT-TOOT!" sang the littlest steam engine in the whole big bustling railway yard as he started merrily out on his day's journey. "Toot-toot!"

"Too-oot-Too-oot!" "Too-oot-Too-oot!" blasts from other engines answered, friendly little bursts of steam shooting up from their black pipes to wave good-bye.

"What a beautiful day!" exulted the little engine as he chuck-a-chucked rapidly out of the station and across the sunshiny valley. "Oh, isn't it grand to be an engine and just race along and see the birds, and squirrels, and flowers and everything."

Little Engine smiled to himself as he started to climb the hill at the farther side of the valley. His chuck-a-chucks grew slower and louder and puffier. It was hard work for a little engine. "Dear me!" he murmured as he let off steam. "I wish there was a nice, happy engine over the top. Old Thousand is always so cross. It would be a lot easier to climb this hill if there was someone just over the top waiting to shout 'Good-morning' to me. Poor Old Thousand! Maybe he wouldn't be so grumpy if his number was seven, or twenty-three, or something like that, instead of one thousand. Well, here goes! No use being down-hearted." And Little Engine put on his cheeriest smile and pushed his bright shining little head up over the hill.

There sat a great big black engine puffing out great big black clouds of smoke and frowning great big cross frowns.

"Toot-toot," called the little engine in his cheery, happy way.

Big Engine puffed out his clouds of smoke and steam, but answered never a word and didn't even look in Little Engine's direction.

"Toot-toot!" insisted the little engine starting down the slope. Big Engine did not answer.

"The mean old thing!" snorted the little engine as he dashed down the hill, shaking up some of the passengers so that they wondered if he was running away with them.

"Well!" said Little Engine as he slowed down to sixty miles an hour, "I'm going to keep right on speaking to him every morning. Old Grouch! He's not so much."

So every morning when Little Engine pushed his nose up over the hill and saw Big Engine lazily puffing his big, black clouds of smoke into the air, "Toot-Toot," would come the cheery morning call. Sometimes Big Engine would snarl, "Toot," but usually he just sat there.



Snow-White, the Goat

By Ruth Hope

Snow-white is as pretty a goat as you ever saw. She is the pet and companion of Giles, who lives in a low-roofed house on some green-clad hills in Canton Vaud, Switzerland.

Giles wears a long knitted cap of bright red and a short knitted jacket, like a sweater. When he takes up his wooden pail and goes out to milk his other pet, the cow on which the little family depends for much of its food, Snow-white follows closely and so does the black and white kitten which laps up any drops of milk falling on the grass.

Snow-white is quite a member of the family and has a little room with nice, warm straw, all to herself. She provides milk for Giles and his mother, from

which they make a very delicious cheese.

In Italy, too, children are very fond of goat's milk. Often a man goes along city streets with a herd of goats, stopping frequently to fill a cup or bowl with warm, fresh liquid, milked on the spot. Or he may take a goat up the stairs of a house, its tiny feet tapping on each stone step, to deliver the day's milk at the door.

A sort of cream cheese is made in Italy from goats' milk and very good it is. It is molded into small forms and placed on a board carried by a man or woman on the head. Through the streets they go, calling musically, "*Ecco! Ricotta fresca-ricot-ta fres-ca!*" (Here is fresh ricotta-goats' cheese!)

"Maybe it will make him feel better anyway," said Little Engine and he'd chuck along, singing his little song and making all his passengers feel comfortable and happy, too. It sometimes made him all frothy inside and made his water boil at the way Old Thousand treated him, but he never stayed unhappy long.

Then one morning when he was chuck-a-chucking across the sunshiny valley and thinking of big black Thousand waiting for him over the hill, he had a new idea. "Maybe he'll treat me with respect if he thinks I'm as big as he is," gurgled Little Engine, and he galloped across the plain so fast that he had time to sit at the bottom of the hill for a few minutes and rest before starting to climb.

The passengers all began sticking their heads out of the windows to see if Little Engine had broken anything in his wild race across the valley; but Little Engine didn't pay any attention to them. He just sat there resting and working up a lot of nice, white, foamy steam in his boilers. Then up the hill he went, laughing at the joke he had planned on Big Engine.

He made as much noise as he could and saved his steam until he was ready to

peek over the top. Then with a loud sizzling the steam went up in a great cloud all around him and he glided down to where Old Thousand sat puffing up big black clouds as usual.

There wasn't a sign of Little Engine showing. Just one great big white cloud of steam with something puffing away in the middle, looking as big as a threshing machine.

Big Engine just couldn't help looking. "Too-ot! Too-ot!" he said in a very respectful tone.

Little Engine poked his head up out of the steam. "Toot! Toot!" he said saucily and chuck-a-chucked away down the hill laughing gleefully all the way.

"Well I never!" said Big Engine and felt very foolish about it.

Next morning when Little Engine laughed, "Toot! Toot!" the minute he was over the hill, Big Engine hesitated, then laughed out a "Too-ot! Too-ot!" as much as to say, "The joke's on me."

After that the passengers always listened to hear the little engine's "Toot-Toot!" answered by a big friendly "Too-ot! Too-ot!" and everybody, even Big Engine, would smile without exactly knowing why.

THE BEACON CLUB

The Editor's Post Box

Writing a letter for this corner makes you a member of the Club. Address, The Beacon Club, 215 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass.

2501 FOURTH ST.,
MOLINE, ILL.

Dear Editor: As it is one of my usual customs to read *The Beacon*, I would like very much to join your club and be one of its members. I would appreciate it very much if you would give me the address of some boy about 15 or 16—which is my age—who lives in China, Japan, or India.

The Field Secretary of the Mid-West was present at our club at church. I wish more like him would come and tell us many interesting things.

Sincerely yours,

ALLEN C. SAUNDERS.

235 LEWIS ST.,
HARRISBURG, PA.

Dear Editor: I go to the Unitarian Church of Harrisburg, Pa. My Sunday-

OUR PURPOSE: Helpfulness.

OUR MOTTO: Let your light shine.

OUR BADGE: The Beacon Club Button.

school teacher is Miss Long. I am very fond of her. Our pastor is the Rev. William A. Vrooman, of Wilmington, Delaware. I am seven years old and I am in the third grade at school.

I read *The Beacon* every Sunday and work the puzzles. I would like to belong to the Beacon Club.

Sincerely,

ELIZABETH ANN SAWYER.

46 BEACH ST.,
WOBURN, MASS.

Dear Editor: I like your *Beacons* very much. My twin sister and I are in the fifth grade. Our teacher's name is Miss Eaton. She is very nice. We enjoy your puzzles and stories very much. We would like to belong to the Beacon Club.

Yours truly,

EDNA and EDITH HUTCHINSON.

Common Ground

By HILDA RICHMOND

The visit on which Anne Winslow had counted so much came to naught as her mother rightly judged when Anne got home and was not enthusiastic about the pleasures Aunt Kathie had arranged for her. Aunt Kathie was elderly and a semi-invalid, so she had asked some of the girls in the neighborhood to help her plan some parties and entertainments for the guest.

"You see, Mother, it was this way," explained Anne when asked about her lack of enthusiasm. "The things I like they didn't like, and I simply could not enjoy their fun. They thought hiking a nuisance, and they would not show any interest in athletics. They said they had outgrown kodaks years ago and their reading was the kind that I could not enjoy. They called me Puritan and Prude, but I'd rather be both than to spend my time in their joys, as they called them!"

"Now you know, Mother, that we girls like the boys and have good times with them at our parties, but we are not silly about them. We like clothes but we do not say that we adore them, neither do we talk about them continually. I never heard so many adjectives as those girls used about boys and clothes. Sweet and stunning and adorable and gorgeous and such words were mixed in all their

talk. Even Aunt Kathie was disgusted with some of the coarse and rude talk in addition to the extravagant phrases they used, and you know how gentle and charming she is, ever ready to excuse faults."

"The trouble was that there was no common ground on which you could meet the strangers," said her mother.

"Exactly! I could not walk in their paths and they knew nothing of the fun possible with simple, everyday good times," said Anne. "My, it seems good to be home! And here comes Tom anxious to hear all about the trip. Tom, I wouldn't give your little finger for all the boys I met at Aunt Kathie's. They were so silly!"

"I've always felt that appreciation would enter your mind sooner or later," said Tom with a profound bow. "Sis, you really have been enjoying the society of a lot of superior young men, and didn't realize it until you got away from home."

"Well, I do now," said Anne. "And I'm going to tell the whole crowd that very thing. No keeping flowers for dead folks for me. I'm going to have a lot of bouquets ready when the bunch get here tonight to make taffy. The best part of my visit is getting home to meet people on what Mother terms common ground, but I think it must be uncommon ground for some folks judging from what I've seen and heard."

Puzzlers

Words Found in "Fountain"

- | | |
|-----------------------|---------------|
| 1. A name. | 6. A fruit. |
| 2. Recreation. | 7. Stout. |
| 3. Within. | 8. Not in. |
| 4. One. | 9. Sunburned. |
| 5. Measure of weight. | 10. Proper. |

There are at least ten other words in "Fountain." How many more can you find?
B. RANDOLPH.

Anna Gram Says

Scramble each word below, add a letter and make up a new word which is defined.

Scramble CRUSH with an O and get a number of people singing together.

Scramble STOVE with an R and get people who are casting ballots.

Scramble TEACH with an S and get persons who play games dishonestly.

Scramble TRACE with a D and get something that has been carried in a cart.

Scramble STEEP with an R and get to annoy.

HARVEY PEAKE.

Answers to Puzzle in No. 11

Anagram Puzzle.—1. Denver—Nerved.
2. Etna—Neat. 3. Rome—More. 4. Peru—Pure. 5. Arno—Nora. 6. Andes—Danes.
7. Rhone—Heron.

Questions in Literature.—1. Hiawatha.
2. Albert Payson Terhune. 3. Anna Sewell. 4. A friend of Don Quixote. 5. Louisa May Alcott. 6. D'Artagnon.
7. Robin Hood. 8. Charles Dickens in "A Christmas Carol." 9. Portia in "The Merchant of Venice." 10. Tennyson in "The Charge of the Light Brigade."

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